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***Listening in Detail: Performances of Cuban Music.* By Alexandra T. Vazquez. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013. Pp. xviii + 333. £67/\\$89.95 Hb; £16.99/\\$24.95 Pb.**

Michael Nardone

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In so doing, Murphy engages with the ongoing debate in Williams studies about the merit of his work outside a generally agreed-upon acclaimed period, bookended by *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) and *The Night of the Iguana* (1961).

Williams became *persona non grata* on Broadway after 1961, a period when he tried in vain to engage theatregoers with non-realistic drama. While less favourable critics have dismissed Williams's later work, others have praised his late experimental plays. Judging from her cogent observations, Murphy sides with the latter in this debate by championing not only Williams's late venture into avant-garde theatre but also his early commitment to a 'theatre of social engagement' (p. 3).

One of Murphy's goals is 'to consider [Williams's] better-known plays in the context of his earlier and later work' (p. 3). In chapter 1, Murphy links Williams's work during his so-called apprentice years with his masterworks of the 1940s and 1950s, identifying consistent themes and motifs. The last chapter deftly analyses the later work, drawing attention to Williams's experimentation with new forms of theatre. She uses the three facets of the phrase 'gay bohemian artist' (p. 3) as a controlling trope throughout the book to investigate the evolution of this artist figure in Williams's *oeuvre*. Her most effective use of this trope is when she discusses, in chapter 6, the various 'romantic nonconformists' (p. 101) in *Camino Real* (1953). By addressing these marginalized characters in conjunction with Esmeralda's incantation, a prayer that reflects Williams's positive view of the fugitive kind, Murphy gives the reader a new appreciation for this much-maligned play.

The strengths of this volume, part of Methuen Drama's Critical Companions series, are too numerous to mention in this short review, but I wish to highlight the following: Murphy's elegant prose and close reading of more than twenty plays, her judicious use of biographical and autobiographical information on the playwright to enrich her study, the inclusion of a useful chronology and an extensive bibliography at the end of the book, and the addition of four new in-depth articles by Williams experts. These insightful articles underscore the fact that the field of Williams studies is diverse, vibrant and dynamic.

Murphy succeeds in reassessing the playwright's earliest and latest plays and showing how they shed significant light on his major plays. Meticulously researched, persuasively argued and finely written, this book is a welcome addition to Williams scholarship and should become essential reading for both general theatre enthusiasts and Williams specialists.

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Listening in Detail: Performances of Cuban Music. By Alexandra T. Vazquez.

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013. Pp. xviii + 333. £67/\$89.95 Hb;

£16.99/\$24.95 Pb.

Reviewed by Michael Nardone, Concordia University, mdn@soundobject.net

Alexandra T. Vazquez's book is an outstanding example of how to engage with the difficult, uncontained and uncontainable histories of performances by attending to the disruptive, racialized, engendered and fugitive components of the detail. Beginning with an 'ethical and intellectual obligation to the question: what do musicians *sound* like?' (p. 12, original emphasis), Vazquez develops a methodology of how to listen and respond

to those aspects of performance that ‘remain vitally elusive to the critic and criticism’ (p. 17). She is not simply writing *on* performances of Cuban music; she writes *with*, *about* and *alongside* them. Her aim is to allow aspects of these performances to enter and affect the writing: rhythms, inflections, ambiances, refrains and non-lexical noises. To listen in detail means to enter into the surround of a performance, to situate one’s sensing in its midst. In combining ‘description, musician’s accounts, theoretical passages and felt impressions to read performances closer rather than offer technical or graphical representation of notes and beats’ (p. 17), Vazquez aims to be generative rather than definitive. Listening in detail is ‘a mode of engaging things that are bigger than ourselves. It offers alternative approaches to the too-muchness of events’ (p. 27).

The book’s five chapters apply this methodology of listening and response to a range of subjects in the history of Cuban music. ‘Performing Anthology’, the first chapter, considers the nexus of Cuban music and American jazz connecting Havana to New Orleans through a close listening of Alfred Rodríguez’s 1996 album *Cuba Linda*. In it, Vazquez situates Cuba and Cuban music’s relation to African-American cultural production ‘not as foreign comparatives, but as elemental parts of their aesthetics’ (p. 63). In the second chapter, Vazquez applies her mode of listening to an interview with Graciela Pérez, ‘the first lady of Latin jazz’, as a way to re-engage the feminist and oppositional aspects of the latter’s work and life, which are often muted in official biography. The third chapter, ‘Itinerant Outbursts’, centres upon the infamous grunt of bandleader and ‘king of mambo’ Dámaso Pérez Prado, and follows these performative outbursts on a trajectory through the Jim Crow South, to Mexico City, and finally to California. In the next chapter, ‘Visual Arrangements, Sonic Impressions’, Vazquez examines two 1960s documentary films on music in Cuba to reveal creative responses to the intensified times after the Cuban Revolution and during the Cold War. The book’s final chapter, ‘Cold War Kids in Concert’, traces out the implications of listening from a distance as subjects of displacement after diaspora and exile.

Listening in Detail is a necessary book for those who work within the disciplines of performance studies, musicology, sound studies, postcolonial studies and critical race studies. Because of its methodological framework and its unique exploration of inscription and fugitivity, the book will also be of particular use to those who research at the nexus of cultural studies and media theory.

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Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century. By Fiona Ritchie.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. x + 256. £66/\$99.95 Hb.

Reviewed by Leslie Ritchie, Queen’s University, ritchie@queensu.ca

Examining women’s responses to Shakespeare’s plays during the eighteenth century as actresses, playgoers and critics, Ritchie assesses their contributions to the emergent identity of the national bard. Ritchie’s introduction reviews women’s engagement with Shakespeare during the Restoration period, beginning with the first female role professionally played by a woman (p. 3), and heralding Margaret Cavendish as writer of the first critical essay on Shakespeare (pp. 13–16). Sharp close reading of Pepys’s